**Blessed are Those Who Mourn**

**Matthew 5:4**

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**Introduction:** John the Baptist was the promised herald of Israel’s Messiah and the Gentile world’s Savior. God promised to send him centuries before he arrived. God the Son, The Creator of all things, was coming to comfort mankind in their misery and darkness. John and Jesus both confirm in Scripture that Isaiah was describing John the Baptist’s ministry when he wrote 5 centuries before about…

**Isa. 40:3 …** A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.

But Isaiah was ultimately prophesying about Christ’s coming in power after humbling himself to become a sinless man who would take away the sins of His chosen children. Jesus surprised His own disciples when He told them…

**John 14:1-2** "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

Christ’s work on the cross and return to heaven was shocking. “How are you going to right all wrongs, dry all tears, heal all sickness and infirmity if you leave?” They wondered. Jesus began right here to tell them how.

**John 14:3**  "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Christ second coming will NOT be in humility! Isaiah predicts John’s appearing but then describes Christ’s Glorious appearance to reclaim all creation from Satan’s tyranny.

**Isa. 40:10-11** Behold, the Lord God will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him, And His recompense before Him. 11 Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs, And carry *them* in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing *ewes*.

**Isa. 40:21-26** Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is He who sits above the vault of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. 23 He *it is* who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. 24 Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And the storm carries them away like stubble. 25 "To whom then will you liken Me That I should be *his* equal?" says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these *stars*, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of *His* power Not one *of them* is missing.

But…we are still waiting for this event. During the revivals of the 1960’s and 70’s Christ’s children were living with daily expectations of His return. That changed us. We were wanting to keep our lamps trimmed and topped off with oil as Jesus admonished us to. The church wanted to forsake our sin and love for the world because Jesus was coming again for us.

**1 Jn. 3:2-3** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

As the decades past the church got her eyes off Jesus and fixed firmly on the world. Many Churches work hard to be like the world. They see it as virtuous and even as a testimony to unbelievers. “See! We are just like you! We love the same things and you will be comfortable with us!” Many evangelicals actively deny the return of Christ and confusion reigns about His coming Kingdom and our part in it. But when Jesus was here on earth He preached that His Kingdom was coming.

**Matt. 4:23** And *Jesus* was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

The God who created all things promised to establish a Kingdom and great multitudes came to see The King and experience some of what that Kingdom would be like. But…How do broken, corrupt, dead sinners get into The Kingdom that is intended to be what the Garden of Eden was? Free from sin, hatred, malice, spiritual pride, greed and death. The more Jesus said the more His own disciples were confused.

**Mk. 10:26-27** And they were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?" 27 Looking upon them, Jesus said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

What is the Kingdom like and how are the likes of us ever going to get into it? After gathering thousands who wanted the joyful happiness of the Kingdom, Jesus sat down to teach them and us the one and only way a man may be happy. The kind of man who enters is shocking! It runs against everything the world teaches about happiness and fulfillment and even salvation. In the world the happy is the one who acquires what will satisfy him. He is rich! He is proud and assertive! He is self-sufficient and independent! Jesus starts His description of the truly joyful, happy and blessed member of the kingdom this way:

**Matthew 5:1-3**  And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 And opening His mouth He *began* to teach them, saying, 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus chooses His language precisely here. **Poor in Spirit** describes a man who is thoroughly frightened. He is cowering down and hiding himself out of fear. He slinks and crouches. The “poor in spirit” is *destitute of spiritual resources. He knows he has no spiritual influence with God and position of honor. He is lowly and afflicted.* He is a beggar sitting on the ground with his hand out and face turned away in shame.

 **Luke 16:20** "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

The first qualification for any human to enter the Kingdom of God is spiritual poverty. The steadfast conviction that you have nothing to bring, nothing to offer, nothing with which to pay. The reformation cry of “Faith Alone in Christ Alone” describes Christ’s first point.

**"Blessed are those who mourn” [Matt 5:4a]:** In Scripture there are nine different Greek words to describe grief, sorrow and mourning. It is part and parcel of this life but it is unwanted, nevertheless.

**Job 5:7** For man is born for trouble, As sparks fly upward.

When any person suffers the loss of everything they cherish there is grief and mourning. A job! A dream! An aspiration! A loved one! Wealth or possessions! All things men hope in in this world. Observe a man who has just lost His wealth, home, loved ones or any other possession through circumstances over which he has no control. Does he now mourn? Of course! We can all understand this metaphor.

The word translated “mourn” used by Jesus is the strongest word available. It is reserved for death and Jesus is describing what happens when a man or woman realizes they are spiritually destitute while being in absolute need of salvation. The people of Jesus’ day were just as puzzled by this as you are. “Sorrow and grief is the thing we are all trying to avoid so how can mourning make you happy?” Jesus is describing the spiritual steps of those who enter the Kingdom of God. First a man comes to see that nothing he has ever hoped in will help him be saved, his first reaction is grief. The reason most men avoid this sermon or try to explain it away is because this realization of spiritual poverty is a work of The Holy Spirit amongst the lost:

**Jn. 16:7-8** "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment;

When God shows a man his true condition so that that man sees himself as God sees him, he will mourn for his loss of all the things he once trusted in. It has all vanished like dew in a hot morning sun. This happened to Paul the Pharisee. After a rather impressive list of his imagined spiritual qualifications, Paul concluded this way;

**Phil. 3:7-9** But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,

Listen to Daniel or David as they mourn their own sin and the sins of Israel.

**Daniel 9:3-5**  3 So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek *Him by* prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. 4 And I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly, and rebelled, even turning aside from Thy commandments and ordinances.

**Psalm 51:1-4**     Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4 Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, And done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, And blameless when Thou dost judge.

Jesus uses a present tense of the word “mourn.” “happy are those who continually mourn.” This seems so very wrong to the man who has never come to the end of himself and seen his or her destitute spiritual condition. To us … it makes perfect sense. Our sinful broken condition looks back at us in the mirror. Our thoughts and words about and toward others is a continual daily reminder of who we are. Our unwillingness to obey God, or to love one another is our constant companion. We can deny this of course. We can try to cover it up with outward respectability and religion but that will only make us hypocrites before God. It will never make us happy, joyful and blessed. Today’s Christians need to realize their true spiritual state. Until we do we will never love Christ with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. There will always be that thought that “God must have seen something good in me!” Jesus says you have nothing….absolutely nothing with which to buy your way into heaven.

**Tit. 3:4-7** But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life

God knows you for who you are. This is who you and I are:

**Mark 2:17** And hearing *this*, Jesus said to them, "*It is* not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

**Luke 15:2** Both the Pharisees and the scribes *began* to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

**Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

**1 Timothy 1:15** It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.

The traditional burial ceremony of a Hapsburg Prince was clearly conceived by those who understood what it means to be continually aware of our sinful, hopeless condition before God. It goes like this:

The Grand Chamberlain knocks three times with a silver cane on the door of the Convent that contains the Imperial crypt.

The doorkeeper asks: “Who is there?”

The Grand Chamberlain proclaims…

“I am Archduke Otto … Emperor of Austria, Apostolic King of Hungary, King of Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Galicia, Lodomeria, of Illyria, and King of Jerusalem, Archduke of Austria, Grand Duke of Tuscany and Cracow, Duke of Lorraine , Salzburg, STIR, Carinthia, of Carniola and Bukovina, Grand Prince of Transylvania, Margrave of Moravia, Duke of Upper Silesia, Lower Silesia, of Modena, Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla, of Auschwitz and Zator of Ticino, Friuli, Ragusa and Zara, Prince of Conde-Hapsburg and Tyrol, of Kyburg, in Goritz and Gradisca, Prince of Trent and Brixen, Margrave of Upper and Lower Lusatia and Istria, Earl of Hohenembs of Feldkirch of Brigance, in Sonnenberg, Lord of Trieste, of Cattaro and Marche, Great Voivode of Serbia, etc. … ”

Upon hearing this, the doorkeeper refuses to open the door and says: “I do not know you!”

The Grand Chamberlain knocks on the door again and in answer to the doorkeeper’s question “Who is there?” gives just the name of the deceased prince: “I am Archduke Otto … His Majesty the Emperor and the King. ”

The porter again refuses admission saying: “I do not know you.”

A third time, the Grand Chamberlain knocks on the door and the doorkeeper asks again, “Who is there?”

This time, the Grand Chamberlain simply says: “I am Archduke Otto a poor mortal and a sinner.”

To this, the doorkeeper responds: “Come in!”

Purpose to own your sinful brokenness. When you do the most amazing thing happens.

**“For they shall be comforted” [Matt 5:4b]:**

***John MacArthur*** in his book “Kingdom Living Here and Now” says… “So, what’s mourning going to get me,” you ask. “I mope around, sorry for my sin. Then what?” I said before, mourners are not blessed because they mourn. Mourners are blessed because they are comforted. If you don’t mourn, you won’t get comforted. (by the way, the emphatic pronoun *autoi* is used here, which emphasizes “blessed are they who continue to mourn for they alone shall be comforted.” Only the mourners know the comfort of God. Only those who mourn their sin know what it is to have their tears dried by the loving hand of Jesus Christ.)

To the poor in spirit, Christ gives the Kingdom to those who know they are spiritually destitute and know clearly they cannot pay. In the same way He gives comfort to those who mourn their destitute condition before Him. The Kingdom is only given to the destitute and true comfort is only given to those who know, acknowledge and mourn their own brokenness and sinfulness.

So how does God comfort those who are aware of their destitution and sin? The first hint is found in the Greek word for comfort. It is parakaleo which means literally “to come along side.” It is not a new thought with Jesus. God has comforted Kings and Prophets and any who come to Him with repentance and humility.

**Ps. 30:5** For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy *comes* in the morning.

**Isa. 55:7** Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

Jesus while on earth was a comforter. His incarnation was the ultimate expression of “coming along side sinners.” “Another Comforter” was Jesus’ chosen expression to describe God The Holy Spirit.

**Jn. 14:16-17** "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper (parakaleo), that He may be with you forever; 17 *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

He is a God of grace. He is full of mercy and compassion for the sinner. Listen to this same David at another time in his life.

The Scripture is intended to comfort us. It is the Word of the Living God. The Bible reveals God to us and contains His thoughts and promises. The OT was full of God’s encouragement and not just His judgment.

**Rom. 15:4-5** For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

The Family…The Household of God also comforts us. You know it as the local church. It is a big part of God’s determination to comfort us in a broken sinful world. Those who chose to cut themselves off from it spurn the genuine comfort God can give through His other children, the church in the world.

**2 Cor. 7:6-7** But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more.

Jesus sat down to teach what the Kingdom of God is like. He does that by describing how a human being can enter it. No one can be rich enough, spiritual enough, moral enough or religious enough to get in. All who rely on themselves and anything they possess are barred at the door. But the one who comes with nothing, who offers nothing as payment, who is hopeless, helpless, destitute and poor of spirit is the only one who is given the entire Kingdom of God. This is cause for great Joy. Blessed are the poor in spirit!

Those who see and embrace who they really are before God have a godly sorrow over their sin, rebellion and spiritual poverty. They are grieved over what they have done against God but also very grieved over their treatment of others. Asking forgiveness, and seeking to make restitution are outward signs of one who mourns. We should never ever forget how sinful and ruined we are. Keep that alive in your mind and heart. Do not be like the average believer in our day who does not think the “sinner” verses apply to them. They absolutely do. Jesus promises that those who freely accept their sinful state and grieve over it will absolutely be happy and joyful because they are the only ones who are comforted by The Holy Spirit, By the Word of God and by His other children … The church in the world.

Notice what David knew so very long ago. The man who brings nothing but spiritual poverty to God is welcomed and forgiven. And he is blessed! He is happy! He is comforted and surrounded by the lovingkindness of God.

**Psalm 32:1-11** *A Psalm* of David. A Maskil. How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! 2 How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit! 3 When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away *as* with the fever heat of summer. Selah. 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah. 6 Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him. 7 You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah. 8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. 9 Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, *Otherwise* they will not come near to you. 10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, But he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him. 11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.